

Mandala Workshop Outline:

Icebreaker or Introduction/Centering activity
Introduction to the creation process of the group peace mandalas
Visualization exercise and/or welcoming/greeting Peace Dance
Creation of personal symbol of peace
Peace-building exercise, meditation, and/or Peace Dance
Creation of first level of mandala
Peace-building exercise, meditation, and/or Peace Dance
Creation of second level of mandala
Peace-building exercise, meditation, and/or Peace Dance
Creation of third level of mandala
Peace-building exercise, meditation, and/or Peace Dance
Closing activity

Materials Needed:

The paper for the creation of the large group mandala can be any large piece of paper that is thin like cartridge paper or matte (non-shiny) craft paper. You can buy it in a roll from an art or craft store to get it big enough for the size you want for your group mandalas. Using the group mandala photo included in this toolkit as your guide, you can create your concentric circles with a compass which is big enough or with a string on a pencil by holding the string with your finger in the middle and circulating around and drawing each circle. You can also use bowls and large round objects of various sizes and tracing them. Use a ruler to draw the slices for the individual pizza “slices.”



Palestinian women with fabric mandalas hanging behind them

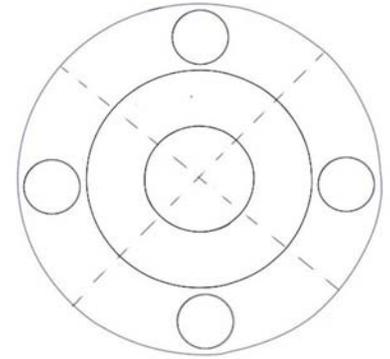
For the small individual symbols of peace, you can use 8.5x11” printer paper and trace around a bowl and then cut out the circles or have participants do that.

Any crayons or pastels will work, but if you would like to transfer the mandala over to fabric later like the ones in this picture behind the women from Gaza, you will want to use fabric crayons from Crayola or some other brand.



Project Set-up

Create small groups of 4 or 6 people. Each group will have their own mandala which the organizer should have already outlined following the sketch provided in this toolkit which is shown here. Each participant will be responsible for their own “slice” or triangular portion (a la pizza) of the group mandala. Each individual slice contains the three layers and the small circle in the first layer which is the personal symbol of peace.



Creation of personal symbol of peace

After an icebreaker and/or centering activity, we focus on our intention of peace and a reaffirmation of our basic being as one of goodness and love and light through meditation and visualization. Then we begin the creation of the mandalas in the group setting.

To begin, each participant will create their own personal peace symbol. The theme that is generally used is peace, although others have been successfully used. Allow the participants to sit quietly, close their eyes, and put their energy behind their eyes like they were watching a movie. Allow the universe to show them a symbol for their own personal peace. This personal peace symbol usually arises without any trying, but if they are feeling stuck or need help, you can offer suggestions on a theme for them to find their personal peace symbol. Some theme ideas are: “illustrate freedom,” “create a solution to violence,” “create a new symbol for love without the valentine heart,” “what does physical or emotional healing look like,” OR “bring together two opposites like strength/gentleness; young/old; sky/earth; love/hate; alone/togetherness or light/darkness.”



Personal peace symbols from a Mandala workshop with schoolchildren in NYC following 9/11 in 2001

Once they have their personal peace symbol, have them use the crayons or a pencil first and draw their symbol in the small circle which will be placed on the first level of their “slice” of the mandala.



Creation of the Mandala Levels

The first level of the mandala is focused on sacred ground. It can be a place on the earth where you feel at peace or at one with nature. It can also be contemplated as a visual blessing for the earth which is sorely needed. This level should reinforce our feeling of safety, protection, and belonging. It is the outermost layer with the largest space for personal expression and contains the personal peace symbol. The colors are personal choice.



The second level of the mandala is concerned with space and listening. Questions to contemplate: How do we give people enough space to listen to others? How do we show people that we value them enough to inspire them to show others that they value them? Can you really listen to someone who disagrees with you? Imagery that inspires contemplation of space and listening includes sky, water, space. We can leave a little channel open with nothing in it (leaving white paper exposed) or use a specific color as a pathway for the descending light to fill afterwards. You can see yellow channels in the picture above connecting the outer layer to the inner. The colors for this layer are typically blue with purple or green.

The third level of the mandala is the center and deals with acceptance, love, grace, and light. Kids will relate to it most likely as love, that place where we feel completely at home. Giving and receiving love. That feeling when it is no longer necessary to be anything or anyone other than who we are. In this space, everything is wondrous and full of awe. Often, we begin all together in the center point of the mandala with a yellow crayon and bring light from the center into the empty channels (or they can still be left white as was mentioned above in the second level). With the yellow crayon we fill all the other levels with light and love or we envision it if we decide to keep the channels white. Colors for this layer are generally yellow, orange, and red.

