



World Organization of the Scout Movement
Organisation Mondiale du Mouvement Scout



A traditional african folk-tale

for democracy and peace education

THEME: Issues such as democracy, the non-violent management of conflicts and mediation are broached using a symbolic background. The traditional African folk-tale and the symbolic atmosphere provide a backdrop, but the problem raised is a universal one.

DURATION: 2 hours (up to 2 1/2 hours)

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: up to 40

STAFF REQUIRED: 2 leaders. Ideally, they should be Africans themselves or have good knowledge of African culture and traditions.

BACKGROUND

The crisis in Burundi in October 1993, the genocide in Rwanda (1994) and the two "liberation" wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) have completely upset the whole region, leaving a procession of refugees, millions of displaced people, famine, family disintegration and complete disruption of social life. Since the beginning of those terrible events, the Scout associations in the sub-region have been very actively involved in continuing to provide Scout activities to refugee children living in camps both inside and outside the country – most particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) and in Tanzania.

Co-operation between Scout leaders in this wider area led almost automatically to the idea of creating a flexible structure for co-operation between the Scout Associations of Rwanda (ASR), Burundi (ASB) and two provincial associations (North and South Kivu) of the Democratic Republic of Congo. This structure has been called the "Co-ordinating Body of Scouting in the Great Lakes".



In June 1996, in Bujumbura, a first seminar took place, at which a comprehensive plan of action was approved and the "Peace Charter of the Scouts of the Great Lakes" adopted. Subsequently, many more seminars have been carried out throughout the region, as have meetings and cross-border activities involving Scout groups and university groups, which have led to many activities of community service and mutual understanding.

At the World Scout Jamboree in Chile in 1998/99, and the World Scout Moot in Mexico in 2000, this workshop was conducted by African Scout leaders who had taken part in the activities of the programme "Education for peace in the Great Lakes". (See document "Scouting and Peace", Section 4.5.)



CROSS-REFERENCE

Various workshops are proposed in this kit which broach the subject from different angles. For example, Workshop No. 2 deals with intercultural education, No. 4 considers minorities, and No. 9 looks at the management of conflicts.

The content of this workshop concurs with the objectives of at least three of the eight “peace treasures”: peace education, democracy and the rejection of violence.

KEY MESSAGES

This workshop invites us to think about peace education in the broadest sense of the term. Some key messages in this respect are:

- Peace education cannot be dissociated from education in favour of democracy, human rights and the respect of others.
- Conflict is a natural and normal phenomenon of individual and collective life. It has positive and negative aspects. What counts is being able to manage conflict so that it results in a new situation, which may be a new departure for an individual or group.
- Resolving conflict in a non-violent way implies: a) personal change, and b) social commitment, i.e. a tangible contribution towards a culture of peace.

In other words, although the workshop is based on an African folk-tale, the reflection it encourages on violence and oppression is of a universal nature.

PURPOSE/AIMS /OBJECTIVES

- To give the participants experience of resolving a conflict peacefully, by way of a traditional African folk-tale.
- To reflect together about peace education and the role that each of us can play to promote peace in our communities.
- To make the participants aware that the whole world is a huge laboratory where ways of life, cultural traits and ways of thinking and acting rub shoulders or clash, collaborate or conflict.
- To make the participants realise that violence is an inappropriate way to resolve a conflict, and that it can have negative consequences for all concerned.



METHOD AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY

Preparation

Required material:

- Small balls for the introductory game.
- Display material (paper, card, glue, sticky tape, staplers, staples, etc.).
- 2 powerful music systems for playing cassettes and CDs.
- Large boxes for storing the material.
- Material for creating a happy atmosphere: drums and guitars, balloons, etc.
- Material for dressing up (2 pairs of scissors, marker pencils of different colours, different coloured cardboard masks, etc.).

Implementation

On arrival, the participants are greeted by the sound of African music.

Plenary session

1. Presentation of objectives

The leader briefly presents the context and objectives of the workshop (see Background, above).

Duration: 5 minutes

2. Integration exercise

The group mixes by taking part in an African dance. When this workshop was run at the World Scout Moot in Mexico in July 2002, the "Ayee Mama" dance was used. Of course, another dance can be used instead.

Balls can also be used. The groups form a circle and someone throws the ball to someone else, who introduces himself/herself to the group (name, where they come from, etc.), and so on.

Duration: 10 minutes

3. Folk-tale

The participants receive a copy of the folk-tale to read through quickly. (Or it can be displayed in very legible lettering in two or three places.)



THE KINGDOM OF VIOLENCE

Mwami is a king who reigns absolutely. His only concern is to retain his power, so much so that he does not allow anyone to raise their little voice or oppose his decisions, which makes him like a dictator in his kingdom, where the population is often subjected to different sorts of physical and moral violence.

The ruthless behaviour of Mwami, and especially the poverty into which his population is sinking, cause his subjects to revolt in the end, and they decide to react with counter-violence, notably by planning to assassinate the king's beloved son.

This counter-violence, proposed by someone close to the king, the wise man Pocho, is averted by another, reasonable wise man, Lino, who, for his part, suggests the mediation of King Muhuza of the neighbouring kingdom. This mediator manages with great difficulty to reconcile Mwami and his subjects.

The reconciliation agreements are signed by both sides involved in the conflict, and lasting peace is installed in the kingdom.

Duration: 10 minutes



4. Role play

Based on the story, the leader gives roles to those who volunteer to play them. (Some material for dressing up should be provided.)

At least seven characters are needed. Very briefly:

- *King Mwami. He is in a very difficult situation. Used to governing absolutely, it is not in his nature to negotiate or compromise. He tends to favour forcing solutions.*
- *The queen (wife of Mwami). She is very family-orientated, and tries to help her husband out of a serious situation. Above all, she does not want her son to be harmed or killed.*
- *Son of Mwami. He is a calm and rather unassuming young man. Despite his authoritarian and tyrannical nature, King Mwami loves him very much.*
- *Wise man Pocho. He is a close adviser to King Mwami, but is double-dealing. It was he who suggested to the rebellious population that they should seize the king's son and threaten to assassinate him as a way of making the king give way.*
- *King Muhuza. He is the king of the neighbouring kingdom. In contrast to what is happening under Mwami's reign, Muhuza's kingdom is calm and prosperous because everyone has a say in important decisions. His calm and thoughtful nature, combined with his moral authority, make him an ideal potential mediator.*
- *The queen (wife of Muhuza). She advises her husband, guides him in his thinking and encourages him in his mediation efforts.*
- *Wise man Lino. He suggested mediation to King Muhuza to prevent violence causing even more damage in the kingdom of Mwami. He gives King Muhuza judicious and lucid advice for his mediation efforts. It is thanks in large part to his intervention that, by overcoming a lot of problems, King Muhuza manages to reconcile King Mwami and his subjects.*

NB: The "cast" can also include one or two "supporters" of the king, or even one or two "opponents"; but the stage should not be overcrowded.





Two remarks:

- The traits described above are only indicative. The participants must be allowed to approach the role play spontaneously, within the framework of the basic story.
- During the role play, all the other workshop participants are “subjects of the kingdom of Mwami”. They can therefore express themselves by applauding, booing, heckling, etc. In this way, they are involved in the conflict and its resolution.

5. Reconciliation

The reconciliation celebration must be really happy and colourful. The “Ayee Mama” that the participants learnt at the beginning could be danced again, balloons/confetti thrown, etc.

Duration: 30 minutes





6. Debriefing

Small group activity

(NB: After the role play, all the participants resume their own personalities and place in the group.)

The participants analyse the concepts implied in the basic story (see Background and Key Messages, above), referring also to their personal experience in the matter:

- The situation at the root of the conflict.
- The different way of resolving a conflict: violently, peacefully, etc.
- The effects of each way of proceeding on individuals and on the social structure.

To conclude this part of the workshop, the participants exchange views on the role that peace education can play in preventing, defusing and resolving conflicts.

Remaining in small groups, the participants make drawings, puppets and peace doves.

Duration: 30 minutes

Plenary session

The working groups share the results of their discussions.

The participants are invited to sign a “peace book” or sheet demonstrating their commitment to undertake concrete action in favour of peace in the future.

The leader concludes the session. Basing himself on the points raised in the different reports, he recalls the key messages (see above).

Duration: 10 minutes



REMARKS TO LEADERS

The success of this workshop depends to a large extent on the personality and leadership style of the leaders. They need to be lively and ready to personify the African way of looking at the world and at life, filled with joy and wonder. This attitude must filter through to the participants, who must “live” the story and the role play to the full, so as to then be able to draw conclusions during their discussion.

Details that will help create an “enchanted” and culturally different atmosphere (costumes, music, disguises, etc.) should not be neglected.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP

- As has often been the case at World or Regional Scout Jamborees, this workshop can be one of the requirements for earning a “Peace Badge” awarded at the end of the Jamboree to participants who have met the required conditions.
- In various countries, there are training programmes for becoming a mediator, either as a professional or as a volunteer. If you have the chance, why not enrol on such a course to train in mediation skills?



SOURCES

This workshop has been compiled from various documents prepared by:

Ananie Bizimana,

e-mail:

apte_hh@t-online.de

(APTE: Project Leadership, Skills Transfer and Evaluation) and

Gilbert Mussumba, Executive Secretary of the CSGL

(Coordinating Body of Scouting in the Great Lakes,

Bujumbura, Burundi

e-mail:

csgl@usan-bu.net

