

Historic Peacemakers

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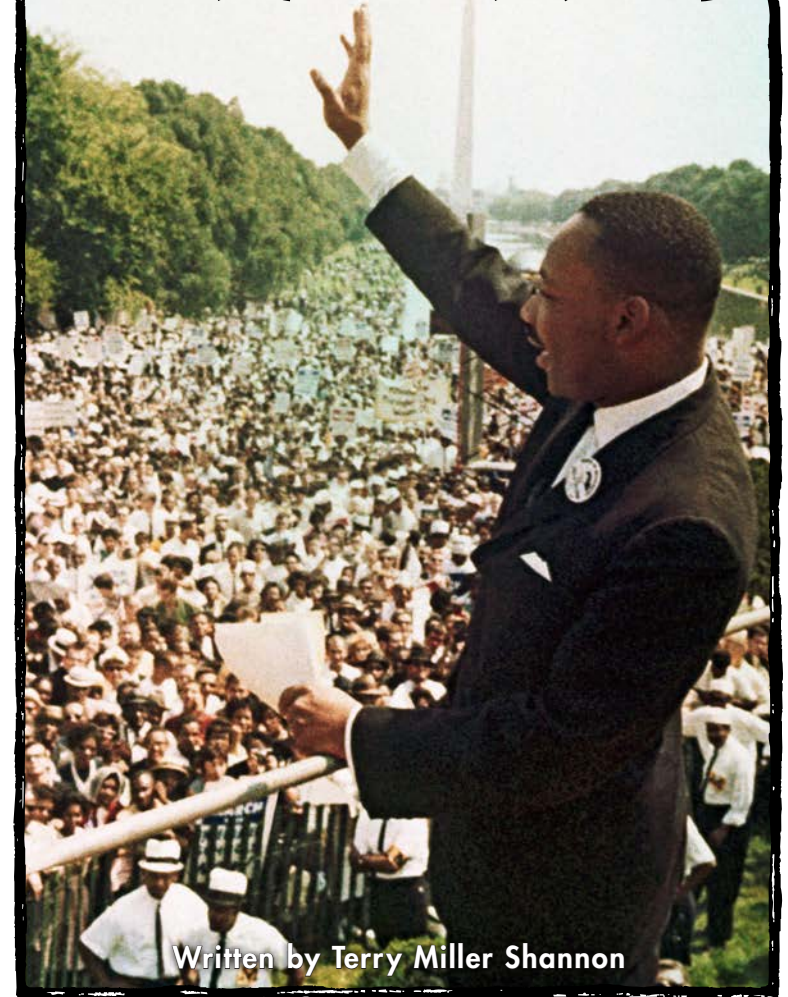


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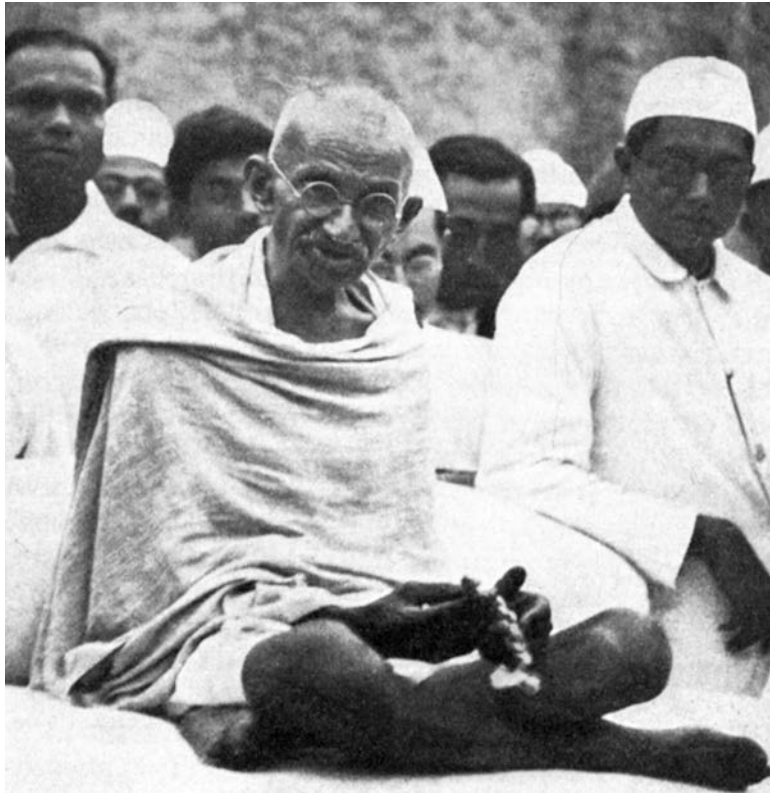
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Written by Terry Miller Shannon

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Introduction

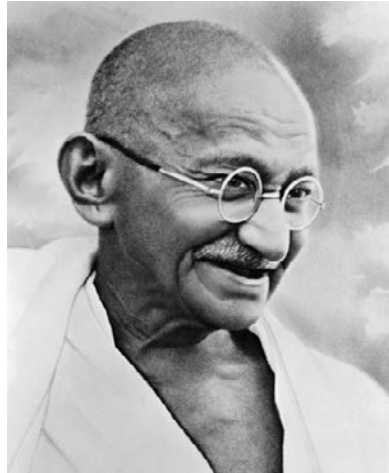
Many people work to make the world more peaceful, some in big ways and others in small ways. A peacemaker is someone who works to end wars, conflicts, and disagreements between people, groups, or countries. There are many awards for peacemakers, but the most well-known is the Nobel Peace Prize. In this book, you'll learn about some of the men and women who have worked for peace, many of whom were awarded the Nobel Prize.



The Nobel Peace Prize, an annual international award, has been given since 1901. The Prize includes a monetary award of \$1.3 million that is shared equally among the winners, a gold medal, and a diploma.

Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi (muh-HOT-muh GON-dee) was born October 2, 1869, in Porbandar, Gujarat, India. His name was actually Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, but he is known by the title *Mahatma*, which means “great soul.” He went to



Mahatma Gandhi

college in London, England, to become a lawyer. After graduation, he went to South Africa, where he worked to help the laborers from India who lived there. He lived his life with two goals: to set India free from Britain’s rule, and to free Indians everywhere from **prejudice**.

Gandhi believed in achieving his goals without using force or violence. He felt the best way to fight a bad law was to disobey it. Gandhi also believed in being a good role model for people to follow.

Do You Know?

Gandhi wanted people to use cloth woven in India rather than cloth imported from Britain. So he spun yarn every day on a spinning wheel.



Gandhi and other Indians march to the sea in protest over Britain’s tax on Indian salt.

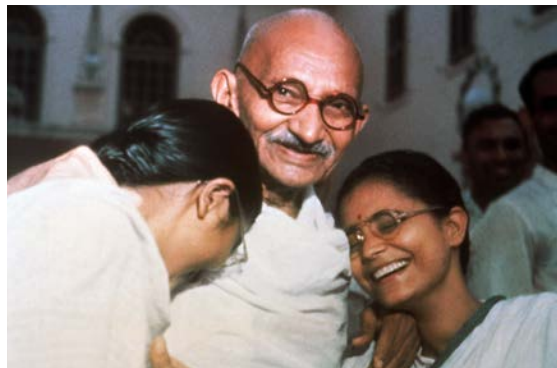
Gandhi is famous for leading his country’s people in nonviolent resistance against Britain’s rule of India. When Britain taxed Indian salt in 1930, Gandhi walked more than 240 miles (386 km) to the sea to gather his own salt. He marched for 24 days, and millions of Indians marched with him. When Gandhi reached the sea, he was arrested.

Gandhi spent years of his life in jail. Whenever he heard his followers were acting violently, he stopped eating. The hunger strikes worked. Not only did his followers stop using violence, but Britain also made **concessions** because they knew how important Gandhi was to the people of India. In 1947, Britain granted freedom to India.

In India, there was an accepted **caste** system in which the lowest caste, the “untouchables,” did jobs that other castes thought were unclean or dirty. Gandhi was against the caste system and invited untouchables to live with him. Also, two religious groups in India—Hindus and Muslims—fought each other. Gandhi was seventy-eight years old and frail, but he traveled across the country to convince Indians to love each other. Instead, India split into two countries—India, mostly Hindu, and Pakistan, mostly Muslim.

In 1948, Gandhi went to India’s capital to meet with Hindu leaders. However, before the meeting, a Hindu man shot and killed Gandhi on January 30, saying he was too kind to Muslims.

Gandhi was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize five times, but it was never awarded to him. His principles, based on truth and nonviolence, have since inspired many more peacemakers.



Gandhi and his granddaughters

Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela was born July 18, 1918, in Mvezo, South Africa.

At birth, he was named Rolihlahla Dalibhunga Mandela. He changed his name to Nelson when he was in school. He studied law and became active in politics.

Beginning in the late 1940s, South Africa operated under

a system called **apartheid** (ah-PAR-tide), which separated races. Nonwhites could have only limited contact with white people, and they had no political power. Native black people made up 75 percent of South Africa’s population, yet had poor schooling (or none), poor housing, and most could work only as servants or laborers.



Nelson Mandela

Because Mandela worked with a black political organization to fight apartheid, he was charged with treason. He was found not guilty of the charge and continued to work with the organization even though the government banned it. He was arrested again and put in prison.

Other countries pressured South Africa to give up apartheid. Locally, black and white people led protests against the system. The president of South Africa, a white man named F. W. de Klerk, took steps to end apartheid. He also freed Nelson Mandela, who had been in prison for more than twenty-five years for fighting for political rights for blacks.



Mandela visits his old prison cell on Robben Island.



Mandela worked with de Klerk to change South Africa's government. In 1994, thanks to the two men, elections were held in South Africa. For the first time, the elections were open to all of South Africa's citizens, no matter what their race. In 1993, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to both Mandela and de Klerk for their work on opening elections to all South Africans.

In April 1994, South Africa elected Nelson Mandela as the country's first black president. He knew he was now in the position to lead his country to complete equality between races. He led the government to write a new constitution, which became law in December 1996.

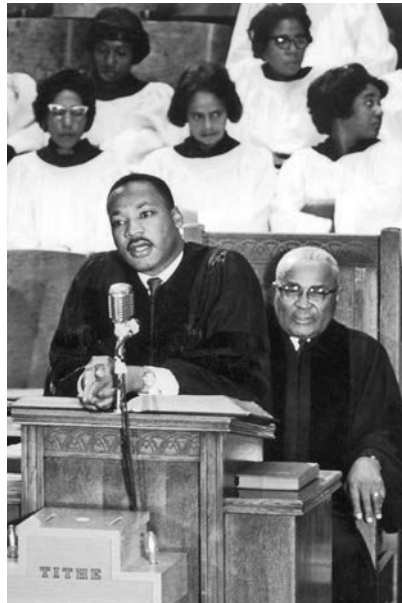
Mandela is known for working with all races in South Africa. His advisors included people of all races. He impressed and made friends with many South African whites who once opposed giving nonwhites political power.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Martin Luther King, Jr., was born January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia. He went to school to become a minister, in part because he believed leaders of black churches should take charge of the movement against **discrimination**.

In those days, southern U.S. cities were **segregated**, which meant African-Americans lived separate from whites and were treated as if they were inferior.

As a student, King heard a lecture about Mahatma Gandhi that years later motivated him to lead his own nonviolent struggle against segregation. King asked his Montgomery, Alabama, **congregation** to join him in actively opposing discrimination by joining a civil rights group called the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and by voting.



King speaks to his Montgomery congregation.

In 1955, a black woman named Rosa Parks was arrested when she wouldn't give up her seat on a Montgomery bus to a white man. In support of her actions, King led a movement to **boycott**, or refuse to use, the city's bus system.

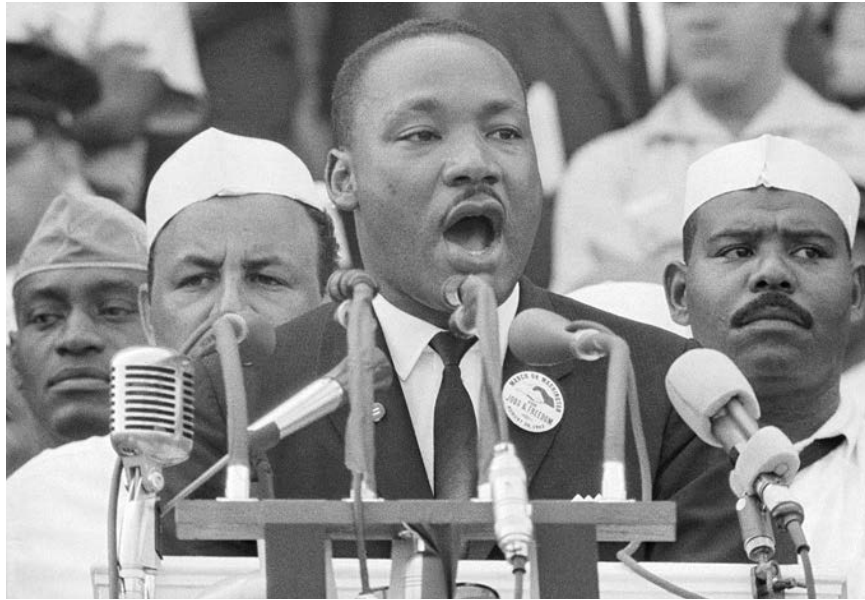


Rosa Parks on the bus after the boycott

The boycott resulted in a lawsuit filed by the NAACP. This lawsuit led the U.S. Supreme Court to declare Alabama's segregation laws illegal.

Now King was considered a key U.S. civil rights leader. King's speeches were so impressive that some considered him the leader of the nation's African-American population. He went on to peacefully promote increased African-American voter registration, integrated restaurants, and more. King's goal was for all African-Americans to be active as U.S. citizens.

People sometimes acted violently toward King. He was arrested and his life was threatened, but King never gave up. In July 1964, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act. Segregation became a federal crime.



King gives his "I have a dream..." speech.

King won the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize, which celebrated his nonviolent resistance to segregation. On April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee, a white man shot and killed King. In 1983, as tribute to the civil rights leader, the U.S. Congress declared the third Monday in January as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Do You Know?

Many people remember Martin Luther King, Jr., for these words spoken at a speech on August 28, 1963: *"I have a dream today . . . of a time when sons of former slaves and sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood."*



Mother Teresa

Mother Teresa

In 1910, Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu (gon-KHA bo-yakh-YOO) was born in the country that later became Yugoslavia and is now part of Macedonia. She changed her name to Teresa when she became a Catholic nun.

In 1928, Mother Teresa went to teach at a high school in Calcutta, India. After eighteen years of teaching, she believed it was her purpose in life to leave the school and help those living in poverty.

Mother Teresa began wearing a white sari similar to the dress worn by India's poor women. She took a nursing course, and then opened a school in Calcutta's slums. In 1950 she started a new order for missionaries. More than twenty-four women joined the order within five years. Mother Teresa opened a home for the dying poor of Calcutta; an orphanage; a home for people infected with **leprosy**; a home for the aging; a learning center to teach skills to the jobless; medical clinics; and shelters for homeless women and children.

In the 1960s, Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity opened similar shelters for the poor in other countries. India's government and the Roman Catholic Church honored Mother Teresa for her work. In 1979, Mother Teresa won the Nobel Peace Prize for her care of the poor. She used her prize money to build more aid centers.

Mother Teresa died as a result of a heart attack on September 5, 1997, in Calcutta, India.



Mother Teresa at an orphanage

Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams

Mairead Corrigan was born January 27, 1944, in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Betty Williams was born May 22, 1943, also in Belfast. They lived during a time when Catholic Irish Republican Army members were killing and terrorizing people, trying to drive the British out of Northern Ireland. Groups of Protestants responded in kind. Hundreds on both sides were killed and thousands were injured. Property damage from the civil war reached millions of dollars.



Mairead Corrigan

Williams met Corrigan in August 1976 after an accident in which a car driven by a member of the IRA swerved out of control, hitting a family, killing three children, and injuring their mother.

Betty Williams witnessed the accident. She vowed to do what she could to restore peace and began a petition calling for an end to the fighting. Corrigan was the sister of the injured woman and aunt to the children who were killed. She criticized the IRA's violence on television the day after the accident.

Two nights later, Corrigan saw Williams discussing her petition on television and called to invite her to the funeral. Corrigan and Williams led a protest demonstration of about 10,000 women to the graves of the victims.

The two women became friends, joined together by the horror they felt over the violence in their country. They decided to create an organization to promote peace in Ireland. They joined with a popular journalist and founded Peace People. The group wrote and distributed a booklet called *The Price of Peace*. They organized marches in the name of peace, in which thousands of people participated.



Betty Williams

Corrigan and Williams traveled to countries throughout the world on behalf of peace for Ireland. Although their lives were threatened, they were steadfast in their goal for peace. By the end of the summer of 1977, violent acts related to the Irish conflict were reduced by more than half.

Williams and Corrigan won the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize. The two women continued to work with Peace People by helping survivors of attacks and victims of violence. They built community centers in poverty-stricken areas and helped to rebuild damaged buildings. They raised millions of dollars to support their programs, including one in which they persuaded terrorists to turn in their weapons. Other awards acknowledging their peacemaking efforts were given to Corrigan and Williams. The two women continue to work for peace.



Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan march for peace.



Friends who learn to talk about their problems learn to keep the peace.

The Peacemaker In You

Peacemakers help make the world a better place to live, and so can you. Many people who lead ordinary lives devote time and energy to work against war and injustice. By working to solve arguments within your family, between friends, at school, and in your community, you can become a peacemaker and make a difference, too. You may inspire others to act as peacemakers. Remember, each effort—big or small—makes the world a more peaceful place to live.

Peer Mediation: How to Start Your Own Peacemaking Program at School

When there are conflicts between students, it often leads to violent feelings and sometimes to violent actions. Some schools have formed peer **mediation** programs. Trained students guide arguing students to work out their differences. Two benefits of this program are: people learn that respectful discussion solves conflicts, and the students themselves solve the problems.

How Peer Mediation Works

It begins when two or more students have an argument. The teacher gives them the option of going to a peer mediator, or going to the school principal. It's always the students' choice. A trained student guides those who choose mediation through a discussion in which they learn to negotiate with each other.

Also, peer mediators can step in if they happen to see two students arguing on the playground.



It Might Happen Like This:

- Mediator introduces him or herself and asks if the arguing students want to solve the problem. If the answer is yes, they all go to an area set aside for solving problems.
- Students must agree to solve the problem without calling each other names or interrupting.
- Students must agree to tell the truth.
- Mediator asks each person what happened and how each felt about it.
- Mediator asks both students for solutions to the problem.
- Mediator works with the students to find a solution they both like.
- Mediator congratulates the students!



How to Set Up a Peer Mediation Program

Schoolteachers must support a peer mediation program, so your first step is to find a teacher who will sponsor your group. Usually, all the teachers will vote on whether or not the school should start a mediation program. Next, teachers go through mediation training, which is usually taught by a community mediation center. Then a small group of volunteer student mediators is chosen or nominated. Most middle school peer mediators attend 12 to 15 hours

of training. Classes teach the definition of conflict, how to communicate and listen, and how to act as an effective go-between.

Positive Results

How well do peer mediation programs work? Some schools have reported significant decreases in suspensions for fighting. In one survey, more than 8 out of 10 middle schools called their peer mediation programs successful.



Glossary

apartheid (<i>n.</i>)	a policy in South Africa that discriminated against people who were not white (p. 8)
boycott (<i>v.</i>)	to refuse to take part in something in order to make a point (p. 12)
caste (<i>n.</i>)	social position based on birth and job (p. 7)
concessions (<i>n.</i>)	allowing something that ordinarily would not be allowed (p. 6)
congregation (<i>n.</i>)	a group of people gathered together for church (p. 11)
discrimination (<i>n.</i>)	treating people unfairly (p. 11)
leprosy (<i>n.</i>)	a disease affecting skin, nerves, and muscles (p. 15)
mediation (<i>n.</i>)	settling differences between people or groups of people (p. 20)
prejudice (<i>n.</i>)	a fixed and unfair opinion about someone because of their race (p. 5)
sari (<i>n.</i>)	a long piece of cloth wrapped around the body (p. 15)
segregated (<i>adj.</i>)	divided along racial lines (p. 11)

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Explore More

On the Internet use *www.google.com* to find out more about topics presented in this book. Use terms from the text, or try searching for glossary or index words.

Some searches to try: *Gandhi*, *Nobel Peace Prize*, or *peer mediation programs*.