Books for children can be among the most beautiful creations by artists today: Colorful and inviting, they can range from simple to complex and often intend to teach or illustrate a concept. The subject matter is as broad as the collective imagination. One area of focus that is receiving needed attention in the world of books is education for peace.

Since its formation, the AMS Peace Committee has had education for peace as its mission. Essential aids in this process, after the direction of the prepared guide, are books that exemplify peaceful living.

Ruth van Veenendaal, a longtime member of the Peace Committee, has compiled an extensive list of peace books currently available. The list is divided by suggested age levels, with a short summary of each book’s contents. It is a wealth of information for busy educators who want to promote peace through reading!

—Julie Winnette
FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

All I See Is Part of Me
A child discovers his connections with all of life.

And to Think That We Thought That We’d Never Be Friends!
In rhyming verse that is a deliberate homage to Dr. Seuss, quarreling and its consequences are depicted. In the end, fighters become friends.

Can You Say Peace?
A colorful trip around the world on International Peace Day (September 21), in which children from different countries say the word “peace” in their language.

Cool Down and Work through Anger
Depicts behaviors/situations that give rise to frustration and/or anger, with examples of what a child may physically experience (for example, “hot face, tense muscles, fast heartbeat, or loud breathing”).

Each Breath a Smile
Through colorful illustrations, children learn to connect with their breathing to help them experience calm and enjoy a deeper relationship with friends and family.

Five Minutes’ Peace
A picture book in which the mother elephant wants 5 minutes of peace for her breakfast and bath, but her three active children have other intentions.

For Every Child, a Better World
Kermit the Frog shows children what basic needs are and how all children need these fulfilled in order to be happy and peaceful; he then talks about how some children are not able to have them fulfilled.

Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message
A child’s version of the Thanksgiving address originated by the Native People of Upstate New York and still used in ceremonies by the Iroquois people.

Hands Are Not for Hitting
Children learn that violence is never acceptable.

I Offer You Peace
“I offer you peace. I offer you love. I offer you friendship...” This book nurtures the human spirit and is a recitation about peace, with hand gestures for children.

If Peace Is
Illustrations and rhyming text describe what peace is.

Let There Be Peace on Earth (book and CD)
Song lyrics brought to life with compelling pictures. The music and lyrics are in the back of the book, along with a page explaining peace symbols.

A Little Book of Peace
Written after 9/11, this book demonstrates that there can be peace in the world.

A Little Peace
Photographs from around the world demonstrating peace with few words.

One World, One Day
One day around the world, through 60 photos that show how we are all one global family.

Our Peaceful Classroom
Children’s drawings annotated with quotes from Maria Montessori reflect life in a Montessori classroom.

Paulie Pastrami Achieves World Peace
Paulie is not good at many things, but he plans to achieve world peace by the time he is 8!
Peace

This lavish and lyrical picture book, based on the Tao Te Ching, ponders the eternal question: How can we bring peace to the world?

Peace Baby

A gentle portrayal of normal childhood upsets, with solutions that lead to peace.

Peace Begins with You

This Sierra Club book explains, in simple terms, the concept of peace, why conflicts occur, how conflicts can be resolved in positive ways, and how to protect peace.

The Peace Book

Simple definitions of peace, with colorful, childlike pictures.

Peace Crane

Based on the legend of Sadakko and the thousand paper cranes, this book uses poetry to express the dreams of another child, trapped in a violent world, who wonders if the peace crane will ever come.

Peacefulness

Describes peacefulness as a virtue and suggests ways in which children can recognize and practice peace, such as cooperating with others and engaging in daily exercise and activities.

Peaceful Piggy Meditations

Piggy manages to be quiet and peaceful, even when things don’t go his way. He meditates!

The Peacekeepers Series: Levels I, II, and III (eight small paperback books per series)

For beginning readers, these stories show how the characters prevent or resolve conflict. The stories, which can be acted out, lend themselves to discussion about what it means to be a peacekeeper.

The Peace Rose (with Teacher’s Guide)

A lovely story in pictures, showing how children use the peace rose in the classroom.

Pledge to the Earth

One sentence per page tells how to live in peace and harmony with the Earth.

Somewhere Today

Shows people in different parts of the world acting in kind, peaceful, loving ways.

Talk and Work It Out

Demonstrates processes of peaceful conflict resolution.

This Is Our House

Together, children find a box—but George wants it for himself: a book about sharing and exclusion, in which George learns how it feels when you don’t share.

The Sandwich Swap

Two best friends fight over food. They discover that the smallest things can pull people apart, but friendship is more powerful than differences.

We Share One World

Portrays global connections through a young boy’s eyes.

Words Are Not for Hurting

Demonstrates that children have choices in the words they say and how they say them.

FOR ELEMENTARY

Alfred Nobel: The Man Behind the Peace Prize

The true story of the scientist who invented dynamite for road construction but was upset when it was used for war. Nobel wanted a different legacy, so he established the Peace Prize.

Amazing Peace: A Christmas Poem (book and CD)

Poetic story, by Maya Angelou, of a family that joins with their community, rich and poor, black, white, Christian, Muslim, and Jewish, to celebrate the holidays; includes a CD of the story read by the author.
**The Big Book for Peace**  
Includes 30 of the best-loved authors and illustrators for children, who combined their talents in a great book for and about peace.

**Declaration of Human Rights: An Adaptation for Children**  
The United Nations Declaration, adapted to picture-book format for children.

**Giant Steps to Change the World**  
An inspirational picture book about activism and taking the big steps to set things right.

**The Great Peace March**  
A lyrical evocation of a call to action for a peaceful planet, this book celebrates the courage and determination to achieve real peace. Music with lyrics is included.

**A Million Visions of Peace: Wisdom from the Friends of Old Turtle**  
Touching, insightful messages from children, combined with colorful pictures.

**Old Turtle**  
An inspirational fable about ecology, peace, and the interconnectedness of all beings.

**Old Turtle and the Broken Truth**  
In this moving fable, the Earth and all its creatures are suffering; the people will not share their truth with those who are different from them. Old Turtle reveals the missing part of the truth to a little girl, who then shares it with others to achieve peace.

**One Voice**  
A young boy’s act to make a peaceful world leads to a chain of events that support his special project for peace.

**Peaceful Pieces**  
This collection of poems, illustrated with pictures of beautiful handmade quilts, explores peace in all its various and sometimes surprising forms: from peace at home to peace on a worldwide scale to peace within oneself.

**Peace One Day**  
The story of British activist and filmmaker Jeremy Gilley’s successful quest to have the United Nations declare September 21 as “World Peace Day.”

**The Peace Stick**  
A lovely story about two children learning to listen to each other, which leads naturally to peaceful behavior.

**Peace Tales: World Folktales to Talk About**  
For humans, peace does not come easily. The author’s thesis is that peace is a choice.

**Playing War**  
A child who has experienced real loss through war tells his friends what happened to him, leading to their decision not to “play war.”

**Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes**  
This book is based on the true story of a Japanese girl who developed leukemia as a result of the Hiroshima bombing. Following an old Japanese legend, the story portrays her courage in dealing with illness.

**Wangari’s Trees of Peace: A True Story from Africa**  
The story of Wangari Maathai, an environmentalist and a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, is a shining example of how one person’s passion, vision, and determination can lead to great change.

**We Are All Born Free: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Pictures**  
The 30 articles that comprise the Amnesty International Declaration are simplified for clarity.
What Does Peace Feel Like?
Ideas about peace, from children around the world, are depicted in simple, colorful pictures, including “peace” in 190 different languages.

When the Horses Ride By: Children in Times of War

When I Grow Up I Will Win the Nobel Peace Prize

Wisdom Tales from Around the World
Forest, H. (2005). August House. Ages 8–12. Fifty folktales and parables with a global perspective. This anthology contains simple truths, common sense, and the promise that we can benefit from past generations’ experiences.

The Worry Stone

Ziji: The Puppy Who Learned to Meditate

FOR OLDER STUDENTS
I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World (Young Readers Edition)
Yousafzai, M. (2014). Little Brown Books for Young Readers. Ages 10+. Living in a once-peaceful area of Pakistan transformed by terrorism, Malala had been taught to stand up for what she believed. She was shot point-blank in the face for this but recovered and continued to speak for girls’ rights to education, showing how one person can change a community and the world.

I Can Make a Difference

Kids with Courage: True Stories about Young People Making a Difference

One Peace: True Stories of Young Activists

One Thousand Paper Cranes: The Story of Sadako and the Children’s Peace Statue

On the Wings of Peace: Writers and Illustrators Speak Out for Peace, in Memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Paths to Peace: People Who Changed the World
Zalben, J. B. (2006). Dutton Juvenile. Ages 8+. The author tells the stories of 16 people, from different eras and different parts of the globe, who were peacemakers.

Peace in 100 Languages


The Peace Seekers: The Nobel Peace Prize

Peace Tales: World Folktales to Talk About
Ryan and Jimmy and the Well in Africa That Brought Them Together
This is the story of Ryan, who raised enough money to build one well in Uganda. Eventually, he traveled to Uganda with his parents and met his pen pal, Jimmy.

Time for Peace
The author talks about why wars happen and what different groups have done to try to stop them—while exploring many ways people have tried to build peace.

FOR TEACHERS
Black Ants and Buddhists: Thinking Critically and Teaching Differently in the Primary Grades

Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux
Black Elk, the Lakota visionary, met the distinguished poet, writer, and critic John G. Neihardt, in 1930, on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation and chose him to tell his story.

Curriculum of Love: Cultivating the Spiritual Nature of Children

Educating for a Culture of Peace

Education and Peace

Go with Peace: Enriching the Lives of Children through the Pursuit of Peace for All

A Handful of Quiet: Happiness in Four Pebbles
Hanh, T. N. (2012). Plum Blossoms Books. Thich Nhat Hanh is a Vietnamese monk, a renowned Zen master, a poet, and a peace activist. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize by Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1967, and is the author of many books about peace. Pebble meditation (using actual pebbles) is a groundbreaking and unique technique to introduce children to the calming practice of meditation.

Honoring the Light of the Child: Activities to Nurture Peaceful Living Skills in Young Children
A key text for Montessori teachers, this book contains many creative peace activities that make use of silence, songs, symbols, and special materials, all of which can make a difference in children's behavior.

I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban
Yousafzai, M. (2013). Little, Brown and Company. After being shot in the face for speaking out on girls’ rights to an education, Malala’s miraculous recovery has taken her on an extraordinary journey, from a remote valley in northern Pakistan to the United Nations. Now just 18, she has become a global symbol of peaceful protest and the youngest-ever Nobel Peace Prize nominee.

Learning the Skills of Peacemaking: A K–6 Activity Guide on Resolving Conflict, Communicating, and Cooperating

Moonbeam: A Book of Meditations for Children

Nurturing the Spirit in Non-Sectarian Classrooms
Wolf, A. D. (2010). Parent Child Press. The fundamental purpose of Maria Montessori’s work is to bring about a more peaceful world by nurturing the spirit of the child.

Path to Peace
Peace and Education

The Peace Book

The Peaceful Classroom: 162 Easy Activities to Teach Preschoolers Compassion and Cooperation

Peace in Our Land

Peace Is the Way: Bringing War and Violence to an End
Chopra, D. (2005). Harmony. How to expand awareness, stop reacting out of fear, and reject war, one person at a time. “Violence may be innate in human nature, but so is its opposite: love. The next stage of humanity, the leap we are poised to take, will be guided by the force of that love.”

Peace Quest: Journey with Purpose
Guinan, K. (2002). Kind Regards. The essence of the Peace Quest method is learning through discovery and encountering life as a purposeful journey. Over 100 intergenerational and experiential lessons, with illustration, are included.

Peace: Thematic Unit

Peace: Thematic Unit

Planting Seeds: Practicing Mindfulness with Children (book and CD)

Reaching All by Creating Tribes Learning Communities
Gibbs, J. (1994, 2006). Center Source Publications. This 30th anniversary edition of Tribes Learning Communities discusses how to reach students by developing a caring environment as the foundation for growth and learning. The author describes how to teach essential collaborative skills, design interactive learning experiences, work with multiple learning styles, foster the development of resiliency, and support school community change.

Shining Through: A Teacher’s Handbook on Transformation

Talking Peace: A Vision for the Next Generation

The Tao of Montessori
McTamaney, C. (2005). iUniverse. Eighty-one mental images from the collected wisdom of Lao-Tzu’s writings, applied to the lives and work of teachers and the parents of young children, as well as to the children themselves.

Touching Peace: Practicing the Art of Mindful Living

World Peace and Other 4th-Grade Achievements

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