

2011-2012 Lions International Essay Contest Grand Prize Winner

Children Know Peace

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The American Heritage Dictionary defines peace as “the absence of war or other hostilities, freedom from quarrels and disagreements, inner contentment, serenity.” I believe the simplest way to define peace is to ask or watch a child.

If you were to ask a child what they thought peace was, what do you think they’d say? Most children only know the world we live in because our parents protect us from the bad things going on around us. Because of this protection, we know not what the wars look like or what poverty is. We don’t really understand fighting around us or in the world. Our minds are innocent. I asked a few children what they thought peace meant, and I got a wide variety of responses. One child said “Peace is no wars.” I know a little about wars, because my brother-in-law was a soldier. My sister and other military families were not at peace while their loved ones were off fighting a war. When all our families can be reunited and the needless deaths can stop, this would be a start to a more peaceful world.

Another child said “Peace is getting along.” Everyone needs to cooperate and communicate better with each other. Children generally do this daily. They talk a lot to each other sharing thoughts and dreams. If there is conflict, they work it out or walk away peacefully. Seldom, do they stay angry and are forgiving. They are not judgmental and accept people for who they are. They have not been taught to be prejudice. They remain untainted and innocent from the harsh reality of our unsettled world. For instance, I am visually impaired, but I am not treated differently because of my disability. I am accepted for who I am and what I can contribute.

I believe that watching a child is the best example that shows children know peace. Although I am blind, I can hear and feel their laughter as they frolic together in the summer breeze. I can hear them suggest a food drive for the homeless shelter. I can hear them working together in unison. The sighted only needs to view what the children are doing. They can see them playing with a new friend they just met. They can see the way they communicate and get along. They can see the smiles of their happiness.

Adults know many things. They certainly know what peace means. Although we are only children, we can still teach. We have a different perspective of peace. Our imaginations are as endless as the sea. We should be watched and listened to, because, after all, children really do know peace.