

# What is the International Day of Peace?



Peace is a common desire of people throughout the world. The establishment of the United Nations in 1945, at the end of the most devastating war in human history, was an embodiment of this universal desire. Keeping peace and developing friendly relations among nations are among the main objectives of the United Nations.

To commemorate and strengthen the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations of the world, the United Nations General Assembly in 1981 proclaimed the opening day of its regular session as the International Day of Peace. In its resolution the General Assembly invited all Member States, organs and organizations of the UN system, non governmental organizations, people and individuals to observe the day in an appropriate manner. In 2000, the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly ([A/RES/55/282](#)) decided that the International Day of Peace shall be observed on 21 September each year.

## How is the Day observed at the United Nations?

At United Nations Headquarters, the Day is marked each year with a special ceremony near the Peace Bell. The Bell, cast from coins donated by people from some 60 countries, is a gift to the United Nations from the United Nations Association of Japan. The Peace Bell is located in the west Court Garden on the front lawn of the UN Secretariat building.

Each year, usually at 10:00 a.m. local time (14:00 GMT), the United Nations Secretary-General delivers a special message before ringing the bell and calls upon people throughout the world to reflect for a moment on the universal goal of peace. Following the moment of silence, the president of the Security Council also makes a statement on behalf of the members of the Council.

## How is the Day observed outside the United Nations?

The most common way of commemorating the Day is observing a moment of silence. In many countries, local civic groups and schools had special events and ceremonies to mark the day. The true meaning of the day lies in the participation of the people around the world, gathering together to think about the meaning of peace and their commitment to its realization.

## What can you do?

- Organize a minute of silence or a peace walk.
- Raise the UN flag and flags of the countries of the world.
- Sing a peace song or plant a tree.
- Have a group meeting or make a new friend.
- Visit a hospital or nursing home or volunteer at a recycling center.

## Did your school celebrate International Day of Peace last year?

If yes, we would like to know how. Send a short report - not exceeding 50 words - to the United Nations by 24 October (UN Day). Best reports and the list of participating schools will be posted on the UN website

([www.un.org/pubs/CyberSchoolBus](http://www.un.org/pubs/CyberSchoolBus)). Include the name and address of your school and have your report approved by a teacher/supervisor.

Mail your reports to: Public Inquiries, GA-57, United Nations, New York, NY 10017; fax: 212-963-0071 or email them to: [cyberschoolbus@un.org](mailto:cyberschoolbus@un.org)



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