

## **Some Background Information for Teachers**

### **Creating Peace Prayer Flags in your School**

Tibetan prayer flags are flown all over the Tibetan cultural world - on high mountain passes, on roof-tops, above rapids in mountain stream, bridges, monasteries, in taxis - everywhere!

Tibetan Buddhists for centuries have planted these flags outside their homes, places of spiritual practice and atop high mountains for the wind to carry the healing prayers across the countryside. Prayer flags are said to bring happiness, long life and prosperity to the flag planter and those in the vicinity.

Prayer flags are inscribed with auspicious symbols, prayers, and mantras. The idea is that as the wind passes over the surface of the flag, the air becomes purified, sanctified and sweetened by the mantras. This is beneficial for all beings in the neighbourhood.

Prayer flags are printed from wooden blocks on to coloured cotton - traditionally the five colours are blue, white, red, yellow and green. The flags deteriorate in the elements and are usually renewed each Tibetan New Year. Wandering pilgrims carry strings of flags with them to adorn the sacred sites that they visit.

The idea of creating prayer flags is one of adapting an idea central to another culture and making it your own while at the same time respecting the integrity of the tradition from which the idea has come. In creating prayer flags at your school the focus is on a recognition and celebration of peace as a central value of the gospels. A variety of ideas on how you might create peace prayer flags has been included in this information booklet.

### **Creating Peace Prayer Pinwheel Garlands in your School**

As a number of schools have already participated in the prayer flag activity another option is for the school to create a garland of Peace Prayer Pinwheels. Information on constructing these has been included below.

## **Some Useful Websites**

### **Tibetan Prayer Flags**

<http://www.pps.k12.or.us/district/depts/edmedia/tibet.shtml>

(Excellent resources for teachers about Prayer Flags, Tibet, Dalai Lama)

<http://www.prayerflags.com/>

(Tibetan Prayer Flags - images, types)

### **Peace Prayer Flags**

<http://www.cco.caltech.edu/~aigp22/flags/>

(The prayer Flag Website sponsored by Amnesty International)

### **Peace Sites**

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/aikids/udhr.html>

(Kids plain language version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

<http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/peace/index.asp>

(United Nations Cyber School Bus Peace Education site)

### **How to Make Prayer Flag Sites**

<http://cecm.victas.uca.org.au/index.cgi?tid=41>

(Uniting Church site on creating peace prayer flags)

### **How to Make Prayer Pinwheels**

<http://www.pacinfo.com/~handley/pinwheel.html>

(How to make pinwheel garlands)

<http://ellerbruch.nmu.edu/classes/cs255w03/cs255students/awozniak/p5/Star.html>

(Step by step instructions and pictures for making pinwheels)

## Peace Prayer Flags in Your School

### Instructions

#### Materials

Paper or coloured material, string, tape or stapler, markers, crayons or paints.  
Optional: collage materials such as old magazines or newspapers, campaign actions

#### How to make prayer flags

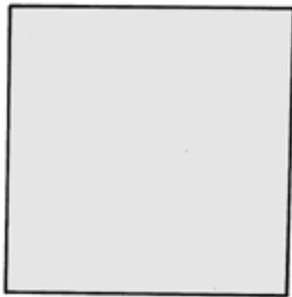
Use colourful pieces of paper or squares of coloured material. Use five colours if possible: Yellow, Green, Red, White and Blue. Design individual flags with words, images, symbols or prayers based on the corresponding elements for each colour.

Colour	Element	Christian symbols
Yellow	earth	grains, wheat, soil, grapes, fruits of the earth, holy ground
Green	water	Fish, water of life, baptism,
Red	fire	Easter candle, Pentecost, spirit, burning bush
White	cloud	creation, incense, spirit, wind
Blue	sky	birds, spirit

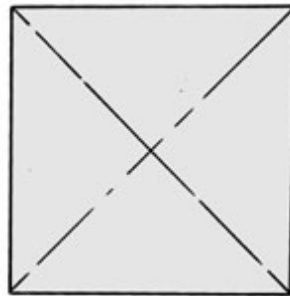
Leave a small margin at the top and you can fold it over a piece of string or rope and tape or staple to form your string of peace prayer flags, or use a paper punch and weave your string through. For more ambitious and longer lasting flags, you can make them from scraps of coloured cloth and use fabric paints to decorate.

Your peace prayer flags might include scripture references of peace as well as prayers in different text types (petition, praise, litany, thanksgiving)

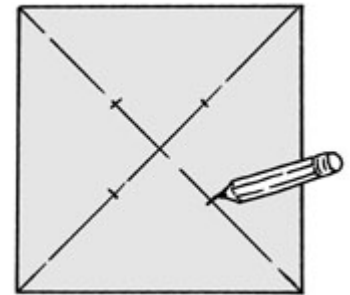
## Peace Prayer Pinwheels in Your School



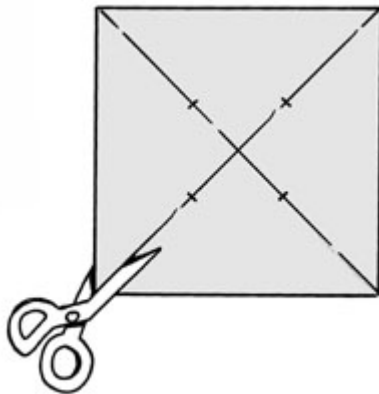
**1. Begin with a square of paper.**



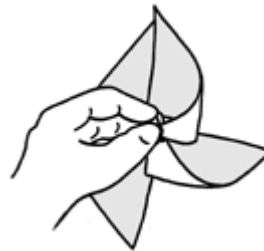
**2. Fold your square, corner to corner, then unfold.**



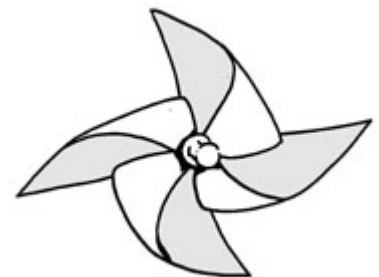
**3. Make a pencil mark about 1/3 of the way from centre.**



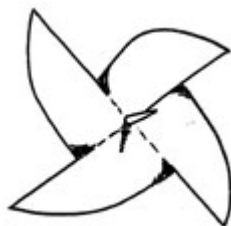
**4. Cut along fold lines. Stop at your pencil mark.**



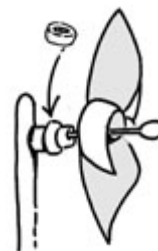
**5. Bring every other point into the centre and stick a pin through all four points.**



**6. The head of the pin forms the hub of the pinwheel.**



**7. Turn your pinwheel over - make sure the pin pokes through in the exact centre. Roll the pin around in little circles to enlarge the hole a little. This ensures your pinwheel will spin freely**



**9. Stick the pin into a thin dowel.**

Hint: Separate your pinwheel from the dowel with two or three beads. Stick the pin through the beads first, then - into the dowel.

## **A Peace Ritual for Primary Schools**

## **A Peace Ritual for Secondary Schools**