

The American Friends Service Committee

1947

You [the Nobel Prize Committee] are saying ... here today that common folk—not statesmen, nor generals nor great men of affairs, just simple plain men and women like the few thousand Quakers and their friends—if they devote themselves to resolute insistence on Goodwill in place of force... can do something to build a better, peaceful world.

The American Friends Service Committee was founded in 1917. The AFSC believe in non-violence. They have a strong desire to work for peace. This was to give young **Quakers** a chance to help people in need. Quakers do not believe in war. They did not want to fight during World War I. Four decades later, the AFSC accepted the Nobel Peace Prize for all Quakers.



In 1917 the AFSC sent young men and women to France. They fed and cared for **refugee** children. They built a hospital. These young people also built homes. The AFSC provided refugees with the necessities to restart their lives.

- **William Penn founded a colony for Quakers to practice their religion safely. This area is the state of Pennsylvania**
- **The Society of Friends is known a “peace church” along with other groups, such as the Mennonites, Amish, Church of the Brethren and Jehovah’s Witnesses.**

The war ended in 1918. The AFSC's work spread to Russia. Here workers helped victims of famine and disease. They went to Poland and Serbia. Here they built an orphanage. They also helped rework farms. The farms had been destroyed from bombs. The AFSC also went to Germany and Austria where they fed hungry children.

The 1930s brought new challenges. Quaker workers helped refugees escape from Adolf Hitler's Germany. They helped victims of the London **blitz**.

The AFSC helped in relief and **reconstruction** in many of the countries after World War II, They also worked in India, China, and Japan.

Today the AFSC has more than two hundred staff working in the United States. They work in twenty-two other nations. The AFSC is working on peace with the 2003 Iraq War. The project is called, “The Eyes Wide Open Exhibit [\[2\]](#).” This exhibit travels around the United States. It displays in public spaces one pair of combat boots for each American killed in the ongoing fighting in Iraq. More than one thousand pairs of donated civilian shoes are displayed. The exhibit is to be a reminder of the **human costs of war**.

Suggested Classroom Activities

Vocabulary

- 1. Quaker**
- 2. Refugee**
- 3. Reconstruction**
- 4. Blitz**
- 5. Justice**
- 6. Witness**
- 7. Human Costs of War**

Discussion Questions

1. What is a Quaker Friend?
2. Why was the AFSC given the Nobel Peace Prize?
3. What are some of the more controversial actions of the AFSC?
4. Why is the AFSC promoting The Eyes Wide Open Exhibit?

Classroom Activity

Making a Map of the "Theme Peace"

Goal:

- To create a map for the theme Peace

Objective:

- To express or represent a feeling or value in a map

Activities:

- Participants can brainstorm by jotting down ideas or diagrams idea that will assist them to develop a map. The facilitator of the group

can discuss the process of mapping and show samples to assist participants to construct their own map on the "theme"

- Each individual can show and discuss their work with other members of their group and individuals may participate in a group-mapping project.

Materials:

- Paper and colored pens or collage materials.

Evaluation/Assessment:

- Each individual can evaluate the process of participating in the activity and offer suggestions in the feedback form.

Technology Options

After taking a digital photograph and upload the work to www.nobelpeacelarettes.org to be posted on the website.

Read together:

When I Grow Up, I Will Win the Nobel Peace Prize (Hardcover)

By [Isabel Pin](#) (Author), [Nancy Seitz](#) (Translator)

Bibliography

American Friends Service Committee.

<http://www.afsc.org/default.htm>

Quaker United Nations Offices. <http://www.quno.org/>

Nobel Committee information on the 1947 Peace Prize.

<http://www.nobel.se/peace/laureates/1947/index.html>

Eyes Wide Open Exhibit Home Page. <http://eyes.afsc.org/>

