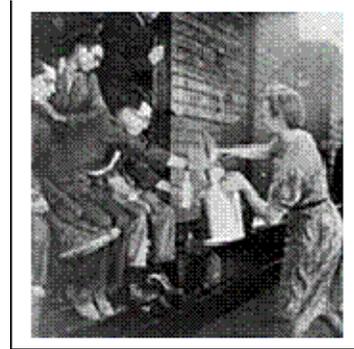


The American Friends Service Committee

1947

“You [the Nobel Prize Committee] are saying ... here today that common folk ... can do something to build a better, peaceful world.”

The American Friends Service Committee was founded in 1917 to provide young **Quakers** and other **conscientious objectors** an opportunity to help people in need instead of fighting during World War I.



Four decades later, the AFSC and the British Friends Service Council accepted the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of all Quakers.

During AFSC's first year in 1917 young men and women went to France where they worked in cooperation with British Friends. They fed and cared for refugee children, founded a maternity hospital, repaired homes, and provided returning refugees with the necessities for people to restart their lives.

William Penn founded a colony for persecuted Quakers to practice their religion safely. This area is now the state of Pennsylvania

The Society of Friends is known a “peace church” along with other Christian groups, including the Mennonites, Amish, Church of the Brethren and the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

*“The spirit alone gives victory”
-Arnulf Overland*

After the war ended in 1918, the AFSC's work spread to Russia, Poland, Serbia, Germany and Austria. There they helped victims of famine and disease, established an orphanage and helped farm, and fed hungry children.

The 1930s brought new challenges. Quaker workers helped refugees escape from Adolf Hitler's Germany; provided relief for children on both sides of the Spanish Civil War; fed refugees in occupied France; and helped victims of the London blitz. The AFSC engaged in relief and **reconstruction** in many of the countries of Europe after World War

II, as well as in India, China, and Japan.

The American Friends Service Committee has a deeply rooted belief in non-violence and a strong desire to work for peace. They see themselves as a practical **expression** of the faith of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Committed to the principles of nonviolence and **justice**, it seeks in its work and **witness** to draw on the transforming power of love, human and divine.

Today the AFSC has more than two hundred staff working in dozens of programs throughout the United States and works in twenty-two other nations. Among the many ongoing programs of AFSC, in the aftermath of the 2003 Iraq War, [is the Eyes Wide Open Exhibit](#). This exhibit travels around the United States displaying in public spaces one pair of combat boots for each American killed in the ongoing fighting in Iraq. Additionally, more than one thousand pairs of donated civilian shoes are displayed as a reminder of the Iraqis killed in the conflict. The exhibit is intended as a reminder of the **human costs of war**.

Classroom Activities

The American Friends Service Committee

Vocabulary Terms:

- 1. Quaker**
- 2. Conscientious Objector**
- 3. Reconstruction**
- 4. Expression**
- 5. Justice**
- 6. Witness**
- 7. Human Costs of War**

Discussion Questions

1. What is a Quaker Friend? (Level 1)
2. What actions did the Peace Prize committee honor with their award? (Level 2)
3. What are some of the more controversial actions of the AFSC? (Level 3)

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 and / or 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 feed back form.

Technology Options

Take a digital photograph of something representing peace. [Send it to us](#) to work to include on the website.

Bibliography

American Friends Service Committee. <http://www.afsc.org/default.htm>

Quaker United Nations Offices. <http://www.guno.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/>