



## **Peace and Aggression: A Challenge of Our Time**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 83.04.02

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The purpose of this unit is to present an alternative method of teaching students about the Vietnam War. Rather than an historical study of the war itself, it is a presentation of the war from a moral and ethical point of view.

Concentration is on the following areas. First, we hope to make the students aware there are distinctions between legitimate force and violence. The teaching of peace and aggression is vital for schools in a democratic society. If young people are to be responsible citizens of their nation, they should have some understanding of the problems besetting their world. An attempt will be made to show that understanding peace, aggression and responsibility is the only solution to human progress and moral development. Aggression in everyday life has to be minimized and eliminated on a personal level before the student can have an impact on a national level. Students will examine aspects of human aggression and realize that there are other responses to conflicts besides aggression and avoidance.

Second, we will give the students an awareness of the morality of war. Are all wars just or is there such a thing as an unjust war? What must be realized is that the reasons for war as well as the way in which the war was fought must both be examined.

Third, students will be motivated to think about the problems of obedience to authority, survival, moral responsibility and dissent. Obedience to authority without questioning its morality can lead to destructive and violent acts. Students will be taught the importance of logical thinking. Such a skill will give the student a valuable tool to question leaders as to their motives and their moral responsibilities. It will also give students the courage to question immoral acts and refuse to be a participant in anything that is immoral. The student should hopefully acquire the capacity to meet unexpected challenges and should be able to make informed value judgments.

Fourth, students will have an understanding that all people, including leaders are complex individuals and that this complexity is a result of many different factors which in turn affects the roles they play as well as their behavior.

Lastly, this unit deals with those skills that are necessary for all students of history; the ability to determine fact from opinion, the ability to understand new vocabulary words, the ability to evaluate alternatives, the ability to participate in decision making, the ability to think critically, and the ability to interpret maps.

(Recommended for Grade 11 United States History II)

**Key Words**

*Sixties Civil Disorder American History Unrest Wars Vietnam Ethical Issues*

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